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Human rights questions: Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay and Zimbabwe: draft resolution

United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Guided by the fundamental and universal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] article 26 of which states that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms", and the provisions of other international human rights instruments, such as those of article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,[3] article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[4] article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] article 10 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment[6] and paragraphs

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[3] Resolution 34/180, annex.
[4] Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.
[5] Resolution 44/25, annex.
[6] Resolution 39/46, annex.

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78 to 82 of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993,[7] which reflect the aims of the aforementioned article,

Recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights concerning the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, public information activities in the field of human rights, including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights, the project of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Towards a culture of peace", and the implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,

Believing that the World Public Information Campaign is a valuable complement to the activities of the United Nations aimed at the further promotion and protection of human rights, and recalling the importance attached by the World Conference on Human Rights to human rights education and information,

Convinced that every woman, man and child, in order to realize their full human potential, must be made aware of all their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced also that human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive, lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and in all societies learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect,

Recognizing that human rights education and information are essential to the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that carefully designed programmes of training, dissemination and information can have a catalytic effect on national, regional and international initiatives to promote and protect human rights and prevent human rights violations,

Convinced that human rights education and information contribute to a holistic concept of development consistent with the dignity of women and men of all ages, which takes into account particularly vulnerable segments of society such as children, youth, older persons, indigenous people, minorities, the rural and urban poor, migrant workers, refugees, persons with the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and disabled persons,

Taking into account the efforts to promote human rights education made by educators and non-governmental organizations in all parts of the world, as well as by intergovernmental organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme,

Recognizing the invaluable and creative role that non-governmental and community-based organizations can play in disseminating public information and engaging in human rights education, especially at the grass-roots level and in remote and rural communities,

Aware of the potential supportive role of the private sector in implementing at all levels of society the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,[8] and the World Public Information Campaign, through creative initiatives and financial support for governmental and non-governmental activities,

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[7] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[8] A/51/506/Add.1, appendix.

Convinced that the effectiveness of existing human rights education and public information activities would be enhanced by better coordination and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels,

Recalling that it is within the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to coordinate relevant United Nations education and public information programmes in the field of human rights,

Taking note with appreciation of the increased efforts undertaken so far by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to disseminate human rights information through its Web site[9] and its publications and external relations programmes,

Welcoming the initiative of the Office of he United Nations High Commissioner further to develop the project "Assisting Communities Together", launched in 1998, supported by voluntary funds and designed to provide small grants to grass-roots and local organizations carrying out practical human rights activities,

Recalling that, according to the Plan of Action for the Decade for Human Rights Education, in 2000 a mid-term global evaluation of progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade shall be undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, in cooperation with all other principal actors in the Decade,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004, and public information activities in the field of human rights,[10] including the World Public Information Campaign on Human Rights;

2. *Welcomes* the steps taken by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organization to implement the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004,[8] and to develop public information activities in the field of human rights, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General;

3. *Urges* all Governments to contribute further to the implementation of the Plan of Action, in particular by establishing, in accordance with national conditions, broadly representative national committees for human rights education responsible for the development of comprehensive, effective and sustainable national plans of action for human rights education and information, taking into consideration the guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights[11] within the framework of the Decade;

4. *Urges* Governments to encourage, support and involve national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in the implementation of their national plans of action;

5. *Encourages* Governments to consider, within the national plans mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, the establishment of public access to human rights resource and training centres capable of engaging in research, gender-sensitive training of trainers, preparation, collection, translation and dissemination of human rights education and training materials, organization of courses, conferences, workshops and public information campaigns and assistance in the implementation of internationally sponsored technical cooperation projects for human rights education and public information;

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[9] www.unhchr.ch.

[10] A/54/399 and Add.1.

[11] A/52/469/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1.

6. *Also encourages* Governments, where such national public access human rights resource and training centres already exist, to strengthen their capacity to support human rights education and public information programmes at the international, regional, national and local levels;

7. *Calls upon* Governments, in accordance with their national conditions, to accord priority to the dissemination in their relevant national and local languages of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenants on Human Rights[2] and other human rights instruments, human rights materials and training manuals, as well as reports of States parties under international human rights treaties, and to provide information and education in those languages on the practical ways in which national and international institutions and procedures may be utilized to ensure the effective implementation of those instruments;

8. *Encourages* Governments to support further, through voluntary contributions, the education and public information efforts undertaken by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights within the framework of the Plan of Action for the Decade;

9. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to continue to coordinate and harmonize rights education and information strategies within the United Nations system, including the implementation of the Plan of Action, and to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency in the use, processing, management and distribution of human rights information and educational materials, including through electronic means;

10. *Encourages* Governments to contribute to the further development of the Web site of the Office of the High Commissioner,[9] in particular with respect to the dissemination of human rights education materials and tools, and to continue and expand the publications and external relations programmes of the Office;

11. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue to support national capacities for human rights education and information through its technical cooperation programme in the field of human rights, including the organization of training courses and the development of targeted training materials for professional audiences, as well as the dissemination of human rights information materials as a component of technical cooperation projects;

12. *Urges* the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat to continue to utilize United Nations information centres for the timely dissemination, within their designated areas of activity, of basic information, reference and audio-visual materials on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the reports of States parties under international human rights instruments, and, to this end, to ensure that the information centres are supplied with adequate quantities of those materials;

13. *Stresses* and the need for close collaboration between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Department of Public Information in the implementation of the Plan of Action and the World Public Information Campaign, and the need to harmonize their activities with those of other international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with regard to its project entitled "Towards a culture of peace" and the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law;

14. *Invites* the specialized agencies and relevant United Nations programmes and funds to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the implementation

of the Plan of Action and the World Public Information Campaign and to cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner in that regard;

15. *Encourages* the human rights treaty bodies to place emphasis, when examining reports of States parties, on obligations of States parties in the area of human rights education and information and to reflect this emphasis in their concluding observations;

16. *Calls upon* international, regional and national non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations, in particular those concerned with women, labour, development, food, housing, education, health care and the environment, as well as all other social justice groups, human rights advocates, educators, religious organizations and the media, to undertake specific activities of formal, non-formal and informal education, including cultural events, alone and in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, in implementing the Plan of Action;

17. *Urges* Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the mid-term global evaluation to be undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner in 2000, of progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade by providing appropriate information on steps undertaken in this regard;

18. *Requests* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue implementation of the "Assisting Communities Together" project and to consider other appropriate ways and means to support human rights education activities, including those undertaken by non-governmental organizations.

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General, through the High Commissioner for Human Rights, to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community and of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights education and public information, and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session the mid-term global evaluation report of progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade for consideration under the item entitled "Human rights questions".